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THE CURSE OF THE CAMPUS: NO. 2

As was pointed out last week, one would think that with all the progress we have made in the education game, something might have been done by now about roommates. But no. The roommate picture has not brightened one bit since Ethan Goodpimple founded the first American college.

(Contrary to popular belief, Harvard was not the first. Mr. Goodpimple started his institution some 75 years earlier. And quite an institution it was, let me tell you! Mr. Goodpimple built schools of liberal arts, fine arts, dentistry, and tanning. He built a lacrosse stadium that seated 102,000. Everywhere on campus was emblazoned the stirring Latin motto *CAVE MUSSI*—"Watch out for moose." The student union contained a bowling alley, a clock, and a 16-chair barber shop.

(It was this last feature—the barber shop—that, alas, brought Mr. Goodpimple's college to an early end. The student body, being drawn from the nearby countryside, was composed chiefly of Pequots and Iroquois who, alas, had no need of a barber shop. They braid their hair instead of cutting it, and as for shaving, they don't. The barber, Tremblatt Follicle by name, grew so depressed staring all the time at 16 empty chairs that one day his mind finally gave way. Seizing his vibrator, he ran outside and shook the entire campus till it crumbled to dust. This later became known as Pickett's Charge.)

But I digress. We were discussing ways for you and your roommate to stop hating each other. This is admittedly difficult but not impossible if you will both bend a bit, give a little.

I remember, for example, my own college days (Berlitz, '08). My roommate was, I think you will allow, even less agreeable than most. He was a Tibetan named Ringading whose native customs, while indisputably colorful, were not entirely endearing. Mark you, I didn't mind so much the gong he struck on the hour or the string of firecrackers he set off on the half-hour. I didn't even mind his singeing chicken feathers every dusk and daybreak. What I *did* mind was that he singed them in my hat.

To be fair, he was not totally taken with some of my habits either—especially my hobby of collecting water. I had no jars at the time and just had to stack the water any-old-where.

Well sir, things grew steadily cooler between Ringading and me, and they might have gotten actually ugly had we not each happened to receive a package from home one day. Ringading opened his package, paused, smiled shyly at me, and offered me a gift.

"Thank you," I said. "What is it?"

"Yak butter," he said. "You put it in your hair. In Tibetan we call it *gree see kidstuff*."

"Well now, that's mighty friendly," I said and offered him a gift from my package. "Now you must have one of mine."

"Thank you," he said. "What is this called?"

"Marlboro Cigarettes," I said and held a match for him.

He puffed. "Wow!" he said. "This sure beats chicken feathers!"

"Or anything else you could name," I said, lighting my own Marlboro.

And as we sat together and enjoyed that fine flavorful Marlboro tobacco, that pure white Marlboro filter, a glow of good fellowship came over us—a serene conviction that no quarrels exist between men that will not yield to the warmth of honest good will. I am proud to say that Ringading and I remain friends to this day, and we exchange cards each Christmas and each Fourth of July, firecrackers.

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Wherever you or your roommate may be—on any campus in any city, town, or hamlet in any state of the Union—you will find Marlboros at your favorite tobacco counter—soft pack or flip top box.

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